$_{ m JS~44~(Rev.~10/20)}$ Case 1:21-cv-19743-RMB-E PV Pocument Single 1/05/21 Page 1 of 16 PageID: 1

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of illitating the civil do	ocket sileet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT FAGE C	T ITIS FC	<u> </u>						
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDAN	NTS					
Tammy Laird			Global Trading Enterprises LLC d/b/a Rastelli Global Rastelli Foods Group, LLC							
(b) County of Residence of	of First Listed Plaintiff (Bloucester	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant, Gloucester							
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			-	(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF						
				THE TR	RACT OI	F LAND IN	VOLVED.			
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) Caren N. Gurmankin, Esq., Console Mattiacci Law, 110 Marter Avenue, Suite 502, Moorestown, NJ 08057			Attorneys (If Known)							
Tro Marter Averac, Said	.c 302, Moorestown,	13 00037								
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in	One Box Only)		TIZENSHIP OI (For Diversity Cases O		NCIPA		Place an "X" in nd One Box for I		
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	x 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)		Citize	Citizen of This State					DEF 4	
2 U.S. Government Defendant	4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citize	n of Another State	2	_ 2	Incorporated and Poor of Business In A		5	5
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140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment	Liability 320 Assault, Libel &	367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical			-	PROPER	RTY RIGHTS	400 State R 410 Antitru		ment
& Enforcement of Judgment		Personal Injury				820 Cop	yrights	430 Banks		ng
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		atute under which you ar	re filing (L	o not cite jurisdiction	al statute	es unless di	versity):			
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	29 U.S.C. §621, et sec	•								
	Brief description of ca	ause: Plaintiff was disc	riminated	against based on h	ner age.					
VII. REQUESTED IN				EMAND \$			HECK YES only i	if demanded in	complai	
COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.		cess of \$75,000)		URY DEMAND:	Yes	No	
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE				_DOCK	ET NUMBER			
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RECEIPT # AN	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDG	JE		MAG. JUD	ME		

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

TAMMY LAIRD

Swedesboro, NJ 08085 **CIVIL ACTION NO.**

Plaintiff,

٧.

GLOBAL TRADING ENTERPRISES LLC d/b/a RASTELLI GLOBAL

300 Heron Drive

Swedesboro, NJ 08085

and

RASTELLI FOODS GROUP, LLC 300 Heron Drive

Swedesboro, NJ 08085

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Defendants.:

COMPLAINT

I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff, Tammy Laird, brings this action against her former employers, Global Trading Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Rastelli Global and Rastelli Foods Group ("Defendants"). Defendants terminated Plaintiff at age fifty seven (57) and after about fourteen (14) years of undisputedly excellent performance, and assigned her job responsibilities to substantially younger employees. Defendants discriminated against Plaintiff based on her age in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 621, et seq.

("ADEA") and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, as amended, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1, et seq. ("NJLAD").

II. PARTIES

- Plaintiff, Tammy Laird, is an individual and a citizen of the state of New Jersey.
- 2. Plaintiff was fifty seven (57) years old at the time that Defendants terminated her employment.
- 3. Defendant, Global Trading Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Rastelli Global, is a New Jersey corporation with a principal place of business at 30 Heron Drive, Swedesboro, NJ 08085.
- 4. Defendant, Rastelli Foods Group, LLC, is a New Jersey corporation with a principal place of business at 30 Heron Drive, Swedesboro, NJ 08085.
- 5. Defendants are engaged in an industry affecting interstate commerce and regularly do business in the state of New Jersey.
- 6. At all times material hereto, Defendants acted by and through their authorized agents, servants, workmen, and/or employees acting within the course and scope of their employment with Defendants and in furtherance of Defendants' business.
- 7. At all times material hereto, Defendants acted as employers within the meaning of the statutes which form the basis of this matter.
- 8. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff was an employee of Defendants within the meaning of the statutes which form the basis of this matter.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 9. The causes of action which form the basis of this matter arise under the ADEA and the NJLAD.
- 10. The District Court has jurisdiction over Count I (ADEA) pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §626(c) and 28 U.S.C. §1331.
- 11. The District Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Count II (NJLAD) pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1367.
 - 12. Venue is proper in the District Court under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b).
- 13. On or about November 5, 2020, Plaintiff filed a Charge of Discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), complaining of acts of discrimination alleged herein. Attached hereto, incorporated herein and marked as Exhibit "1" is a true and correct copy of the EEOC Charge of Discrimination (with personal identifying information redacted).
- 14. On or about August 19, 2021, the EEOC issued to Plaintiff a
 Dismissal and Notice of Rights for her Charge of Discrimination. Attached
 hereto, incorporated herein and marked as Exhibit "2" is a true and correct copy
 of that notice (with personal identifying information redacted).
- 15. Plaintiff has fully complied with all administrative prerequisites for the commencement of this action.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 16. Plaintiff was hired by Defendants as a Pricing Supervisor in or around March 2006.
 - 17. At the time of Plaintiff's termination, she held the position of Billing

Manager, the position into which she had been promoted in around 2013.

- As of March 2020, Plaintiff reported directly to Anthony Rastelli II,
 Office Manager. Mr. Rastelli II reported directly to his father, Tony Rastelli, Sr.,
 Co-Owner.
- 19. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff performed her duties in a highly competent manner.
- 20. As Defendants stated in their Position Statement to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in response to Plaintiff's Charge of Discrimination, "By 2016 [Plaintiff] was running the billing department. Her performance reviews throughout were excellent".
- 21. On or about July 31, 2020, Mr. Rastelli II and Sal Russo, Shared Service Services Manager, informed Plaintiff that she was being furloughed for eight (8) weeks due to the Coviod-19 pandemic.
- 22. Mr. Rastelli and Mr. Russo told Plaintiff that Defendants' workload was reduced as a result of the pandemic.
- 23. Plaintiff was told that Defendants would be in touch to advise as to her employment status at the end of the eight (8) week furlough period.
- 24. On or about September 24, 2020, Paul Zaun, Chief Financial Officer, contacted Plaintiff and asked if she would be interested in returning to work only for about one (1) to two (2) months on a special project.
- 25. Plaintiff responded that she was interested, as she just wanted to return to work.
 - 26. Mr. Zaun told Plaintiff that he would be in touch with her once Mr.

Rastelli Sr. figured out whether the workload supported bringing her back to work.

- 27. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Zaun contacted Plaintiff and told her that Defendants were still trying to figure out if they needed her and that they would be in touch.
- 28. Mr. Rastelli Sr. subsequently contacted Plaintiff to let her know that he was hoping that Defendants would secure additional work that would warrant her return to work and that he would let her know.
- 29. Plaintiff contacted Defendants a few days later, as she had not heard anything about her return to work.
- 30. In response to Plaintiff's inquiry about her return to work, Mr. Russo confirmed that Defendants had terminated her employment on or about September 28, 2020.
- 31. To the best of Plaintiff's information and belief, her job responsibilities have been assigned to substantially younger employees.
- 32. Plaintiff hired and trained the employees to whom she believes her job responsibilities have been assigned.
- 33. Aside from that set forth herein, Defendants' conduct and comments evidenced a bias against older employees. The same includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (a) To Plaintiff's information and belief, in the months prior to her termination, Defendants terminated older employees and replaced them with younger employees;
 - (b) Mr. Rastelli Sr. made comments about employees of Defendants being better able to handle work and

- complete certain tasks because they are "young and beautiful";
- (c) To Plaintiff's information and belief, Mr. Russo asked an employee over the age of sixty (60) when she planned to retire; and,
- (d) To the best of Plaintiff's knowledge and belief,
 Defendants terminated other older employees at around
 the same time that they terminated her employment.
- 34. Plaintiff's age was a motivating and/or determinative factor in Defendants' discriminatory treatment of Plaintiff, including terminating her employment.
- 35. As a direct and proximate result of the discriminatory conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff has in the past incurred, and may in the future incur, a loss of earnings and/or earning capacity, loss of benefits, pain and suffering, embarrassment, humiliation, loss of self-esteem, mental anguish, and loss of life's pleasures, the full extent of which is not known at this time.
- 36. Defendants acted with malice and/or reckless indifference to Plaintiff's protected rights.

COUNT I - ADEA

- 37. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference paragraphs 1 through 36 above, as if set forth herein in their entirety.
- 38. By committing the foregoing acts of discrimination against Plaintiff, Defendants have violated the ADEA.
- 39. Said violations were willful and warrant the imposition of liquidated damages.

- 40. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violation of the ADEA, Plaintiff has suffered the damages and losses set forth herein and has incurred attorney's fees and costs.
- 41. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injury and monetary damages as a result of Defendants' discriminatory acts unless and until this Court grants the relief requested herein.
- 42. No previous application has been made for the relief requested herein.

COUNT II – NJLAD

- 43. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference paragraphs 1 through 42 above, as if set forth herein in their entirety.
- 44. Defendants, by the above improper and discriminatory acts, have violated the NJLAD.
 - 45. Said violations were intentional and willful.
- 46. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violation of the NJLAD, Plaintiff has sustained the injuries, damages, and losses set forth herein and has incurred attorney's fees and costs.
- 47. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injuries and monetary damages as a result of Defendants' discriminatory acts unless and until the Court grants the relief requested herein.
- 48. No previous application has been made for the relief requested herein.

RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff seeks damages and legal and equitable relief in connection with Defendants' improper conduct, and specifically prays that the Court grant the following relief to the Plaintiff by:

- (a) declaring the acts and practices complained of herein to be in violation of the ADEA;
- (b) declaring the acts and practices complained of herein to be in violation of the NJLAD;
- (c) enjoining and permanently restraining the violations alleged herein;
- (d) entering judgment against the Defendants and in favor of the Plaintiff in an amount to be determined;
- (e) awarding compensatory damages to make the Plaintiff whole for all lost earnings, earning capacity and benefits, past and future, which Plaintiff has suffered or may suffer as a result of Defendants' improper conduct;
- (f) awarding compensatory damages to Plaintiff for past and future pain and suffering, emotional upset, mental anguish, humiliation, and loss of life's pleasures, which Plaintiff has suffered or may suffer as a result of Defendants' improper conduct;
 - (g) awarding liquidated damages to Plaintiff under the ADEA;
 - (h) awarding punitive damages to Plaintiff under the NJLAD;
- (i) awarding Plaintiff such other damages as are appropriate under the ADEA and the NJLAD;

- (j) awarding Plaintiff the costs of suit, expert fees and other disbursements, and reasonable attorney's fees; and,
- (k) granting such other and further relief as this Court may deem just, proper, or equitable including other equitable and injunctive relief providing restitution for past violations and preventing future violations.

CONSOLE MATTIACCI LAW

BY:

Dated: <u>11/5/21</u>

Caren N. Gurn ankin (205900) 110 Marter Avenue, Suite 502

Moorestown, NJ 08057

(856) 854-4000 (215) 405-2900 (fax)

Attorney for Plaintiff, Tammy Laird

Exhibit "1"

CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION				ENCY FEPA	CHARGE NUMBER:			
This form is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974; See privacy statement before consolidating tills form.				EEOC	530-2020-06028C			
STATE OR LOCAL AGENCY:								
NAME (Indicate Mr., Ms., Mrs.) Tammy Laird	EPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code)							
STREET ADDRESS CITY, STATE AND ZIP Swedesboro, NJ 08085					DATE OF BIRTH			
NAMED IS THE EMPLOYER, LABOR ORGANIZATION, EMPLOYMENT AGENCY, APPRENTICESHIP, COMMITTEE, STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHO DISCRIMINATED AGAINST ME (If more than one than list below)								
NAME Rastelli Global Enterprises Rastelli Foods Group	NUMBER OFEMPLOYEES, MEMBERS >20			TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (856) 223-9966				
STREET ADDRESS CITY, STATE AND ZIP Corporate Headquarters/Charging Party's Work Location 300 Heron Drive Swedesboro, NJ 08085 COUNTY Gloucester								
CAUSE OF DISCRIMINATION (Check appropriate box(es)) Q Race QColor QSex QReligion QNational Origin Q Retaliation X Age Q Disability Q Other (Specify)				DATEDISCRIMINATION TOOK PLACE Earliest Latest 07/31/2020				
The Particulars Are: A. 1. Relevant Work History Iwas hired by Respondent in or about March 2006 as Pricing Supervisor. Iwas promoted to Billing Manager in around 2013. As of around March 2020, Istarted reporting to Anthony Rastelli II, Office Manager. Mr. Rastelli reported directly								
to his father, Tony Rastelli, Sr., Co-Owner. Prior to my termination, Iwas not disciplined or written up for any performance issues or deficiencies.								
if any. I will advise the agencies if I change my address or telephone number and cooperate fully with them in the processing of my charge in accordance				OTARY - (when necessary for State and Local Requirements) swear of affirm that I have read the above charge and that it is true the best of my knowledge information and belief.				
SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT \\-?>-20'2.Q Date: Charging Party (Signature) SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS DATE (Day Month, and year)								

2. Harm Summary

I was discriminated against based on my age. Evidence of the discriminatory conduct to which I have been subjected includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) On or about July 31, 2020, Mr. Rastelli II and Sal Russo, Shared Services manager, informed me that I was being furloughed for eight (8) weeks due to the current pandemic and the fact that Respondents' workload was reduced as a result;
- (b) I was told that Respondents would be in touch to advise as to my employment status at the end of the eight (8) week period;
- (c) On or about September 24, 2020, Paul Zaun, Chief Financial Officer, contacted me and asked if I would be interested in returning to work only for about one (1) to two (2) months on a special project. I indicated that I was definitely interested, as I wanted to return to work;
- (d) Mr. Zaun said that he would be in touch with me once Mr. Rastelli Sr. had figured out whether the workload supported bringing me back;
- (e) Shortly thereafter, Mr. Zaun contacted me and said that Respondents were still trying to figure out if they needed her, and that they would be in touch;
- (f) Mr. Rastelli Sr. contacted me and said that he was hoping to get additional work that would warrant my return and that he would let me know;
- (g) I did not hear anything back from Respondents in connection with my return to work. When I contacted them a few days later to ask about the status of certain of my benefits, Mr. Russo sent me an email answering my questions and confirming that Respondents had terminated my employment;
- (h) Respondents' comments and conduct evidenced a bias against older employees. The same includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (1) To the best of my knowledge, my direct reports, both of whom are substantially younger than I am, have taken over my job responsibilities;
 - (2) I am aware that, over the last several months, Respondents have terminated older employees and replaced them with younger employees;
 - (3) Mr. Rastelli Sr. has made comments about employees in Respondents' other locations being better able to handle work and complete certain tasks because they are "young and beautiful";
 - (4) To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Russo asked an employee over the age of sixty (60) when she planned to retire; and,
 - (5) To the best of my knowledge, Respondents terminated other older employees at around the same time that they terminated my employment.

B. 1. Respondents' Stated Reasons

Respondents have not offered any explanation for putting me on furlough and then terminating my employment.

C. 1. Statutes and Basis for Allegations

I believe that Respondents have discriminated against me in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 621, *et seq.* ("ADEA"), and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, as amended N.J.S.A. 10:5-1, *et seq.* ("NJLAD").

Exhibit "2"

EEOC Form 161-B (11/2020)

Swedesboro, NJ 08085

U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO SUE (ISSUED ON REQUEST)

			0,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,				
To: Tamm	ny Laird	Fron	Philadelphia Dist 801 Market Stree Suite 1000 Philadelphia, PA	t			
	On behalf of person(s) aggrieved w CONFIDENTIAL (29 CFR §1601.7(
EEOC Charg	e No.	EEOC Representative		Telephone No.			
530-2021-00557		Legal Unit, Legal Technician		(267) 589-9707			
		(See al.	so the additional inforn	nation enclosed with this form.)			
Title VII of the Act (GINA): been issued of your rece	This is your Notice of Right to Su at your request. Your lawsuit und	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA e, issued under Title VII, the ADA or Glder Title VII, the ADA or GlNA must be sue based on this charge will be lost.	NA based on the abov filed in a federal or s	e-numbered charge. It has tate court <u>WITHIN 90 DAYS</u>			
	More than 180 days have passe	ed since the filing of this charge.					
	Less than 180 days have passed since the filing of this charge, but I have determined that it is unlikely that the EEOC will be able to complete its administrative processing within 180 days from the filing of this charge.						
	The EEOC is terminating its processing of this charge.						
	The EEOC will continue to process this charge.						
	you receive notice that we have The EEOC is closing your case	DEA): You may sue under the ADEA at completed action on the charge. In this Therefore, your lawsuit under the ADI is Notice. Otherwise, your right to sue	regard, the paragrap EA must be filed in fe	th marked below applies to deral or state court <u>WITHIN</u>			
		dling of your ADEA case. However, if 6 ate court under the ADEA at this time.	0 days have passed s	ince the filing of the charge,			
in federal or s	state court within 2 years (3 years	ght to sue under the EPA (filing an EEO for willful violations) of the alleged EPA u <u>ears (3 years)</u> before you file suit ma	nderpayment. This me				
If you file suit	, based on this charge, please ser	nd a copy of your court complaint to this	office.				
		On behalf of the C	ommission				
Englosure-/	-	Dana Rhitto		08/19/2021			
Enclosures(5)	Dana R. Hutter, Deputy Director		(Date Issued)			
H	lank Malcom IR Director tastelli Foods 00 Heron Dr.	1525 9th F	n N Gurmankin, Esq, Locust Street loor delphia, PA 19102				